

# Nuclear Peace Walk

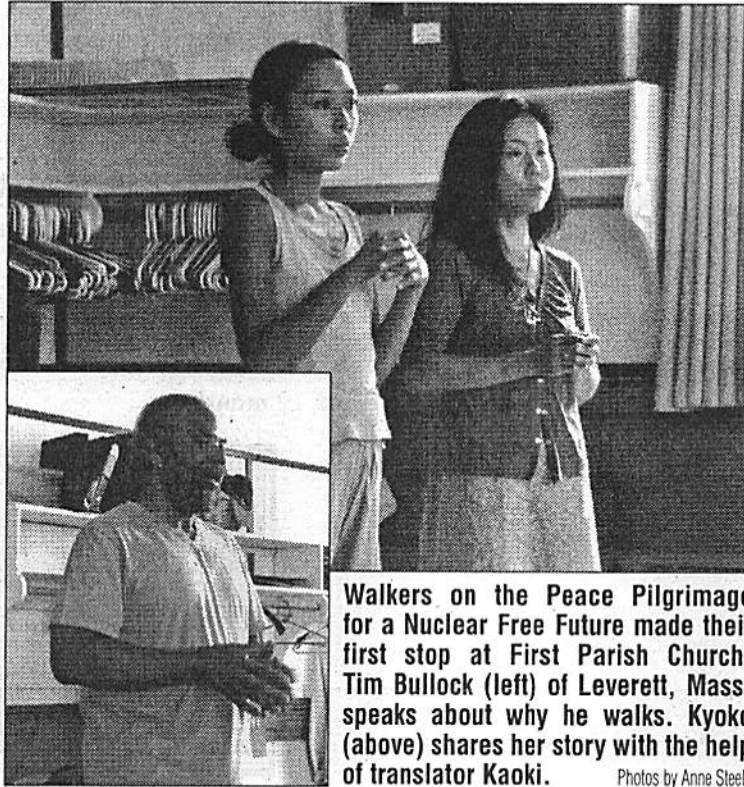
By ANNE STEELE  
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About 12 walkers found respite Sunday evening at First Parish Church, the first stop on their Peace Pilgrimage for a Nuclear Free Future. The 25-day pilgrimage, stretching 300 miles from Pilgrim Nuclear Power Plant to Albany, New York is an effort to end the use of nuclear power and close down power plants with the fear that a Fukushima-like incident could devastate the East Coast in the event of an emergency.

The pilgrimage began Saturday afternoon when walkers joined demonstrators at the Rally to End the Nuclear Age in Copley Square in Boston. They then began their walk at Pilgrim Power Plant on Sunday in Plymouth where they said prayers, did smudging and left peace cranes to the audience of a single security guard before making their way to Duxbury.

"It's that symbolism and that ceremony that brings spirit to this cause, this effort to rid ourselves of this potential nightmare," Tim Bullock, Leverett, Mass. resident who organized the Massachusetts and New Hampshire portions of the pilgrimage, said.

Bullock said that while about 12 people will walk the entire route to Albany, many people will join along the road for an hour, an afternoon or week. The walkers will demonstrate at Yankee Power Plant in Vernon, VT, Seabrook Power Plant in Seabrook, NH, and Knolls Atomic Power Laboratory, Niskayuna, NY. He said they hope to have gatherings every evening, as they are an opportunity to discuss with neighbors and share stories and strategies for how to be effective in shutting down plants.



Walkers on the Peace Pilgrimage for a Nuclear Free Future made their first stop at First Parish Church. Tim Bullock (left) of Leverett, Mass. speaks about why he walks. Kyoko (above) shares her story with the help of translator Kaoki.

Photos by Anne Steele

"That is why we walk — so we can learn from you all what is going on in this battle against nuclear power and nuclear weapons."

Bullock said he faces the issues of nuclear energy and nuclear weapons in an interconnected way, adding the by-product of one helps to build the ingredients for the other.

"We don't see them as separate," he said. "They're the same issue in many ways."

On August 6 and 9, the group will commemorate the dropping of the atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

Among those walking are

Japanese whose families were affected by Fukushima accident.

After a potluck dinner, walkers and members of the community were invited to speak. One of the visitors from Japan, Kyoko, shared about the effects of Fukushima on her family, who lives 200 kilometers from the plant. She said according to news, radiation was not affecting the area, but as time passed, she felt her body reacting as her skin became irritated and itchy and reports started to come in about children being affected with bloody noses and irritations.

But she did not dwell on the negative, instead she urged people to embrace the incident as an opportunity to embrace the earth and learn from mistakes.

"I wish this disaster to be a turning point for a return to the connection we had with the earth and all the important lessons we learned from this experience," she said. "I think we can turn it into something positive for all of us."

Jun-San, another walker, recalled the "Chernobyl necklace" on the necks of children who developed thyroid cancer after the nuclear disaster in Ukraine and discussed the difficulties in Japan today with farmers unable to sell their contaminated crops.

"It's such a suffering time," she said.

She also encouraged people to save energy and use less electricity in an effort to commune with the ways of the earth.

"When we walk it's a step by step prayer to the earth," she said.

Anna Baker from Marshfield, who became involved with nuclear protests after attending a local question and answer session after Fukushima, shared about her difficulty in getting the younger generation involved in the issue.

"I think the next big effort we need is to pull on the younger generation to come out to these things," she said, adding, "What's more important than walking or prayer is to talk. People don't know how much their story can influence the change. We're trying to make this more of a mainstream thing."

Becky Chin from the Duxbury Nuclear Advisory Committee spoke about efforts in town to prepare for a nuclear disaster and to combat Pilgrim Nuclear Power Plant.

"If we're going to change anything, it's political. We've got to get legislation passed that will protect us," she said. "There needs to be more voices than the six on the advisory committee."

The pilgrimage will conclude on August 9, the anniversary of Nagasaki, with fasting at the Albany Capital Building.